A Marshall Cavendish Publication 43 In Fortnightly Parts

The Ancestral Trail

Cyber Challenge in the Next Dimension

43

Galaxia, Anti-Matter Alien

Marooned in the domain of terror

Julek Heller

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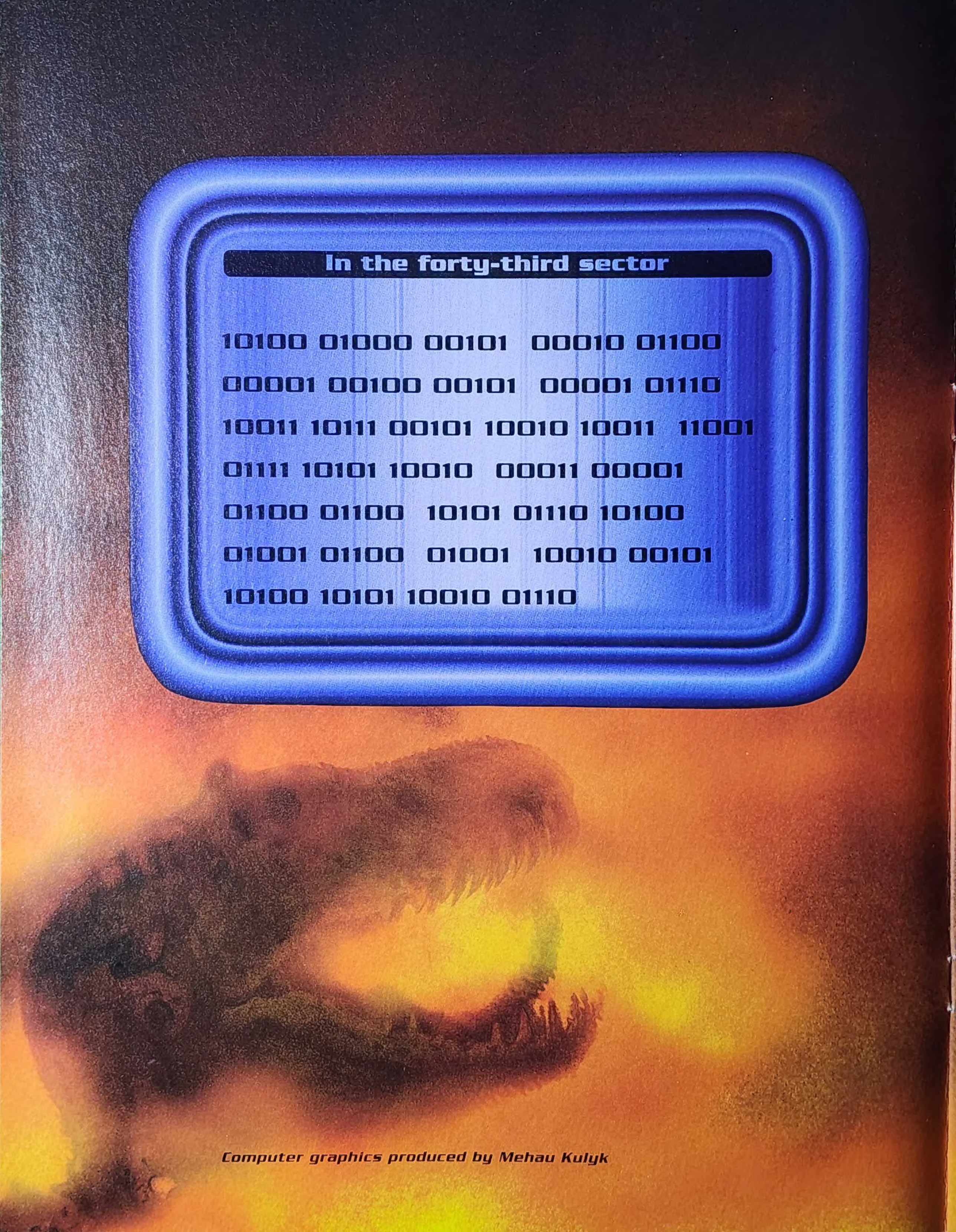
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Computer graphics produced by Mehau Kulyk

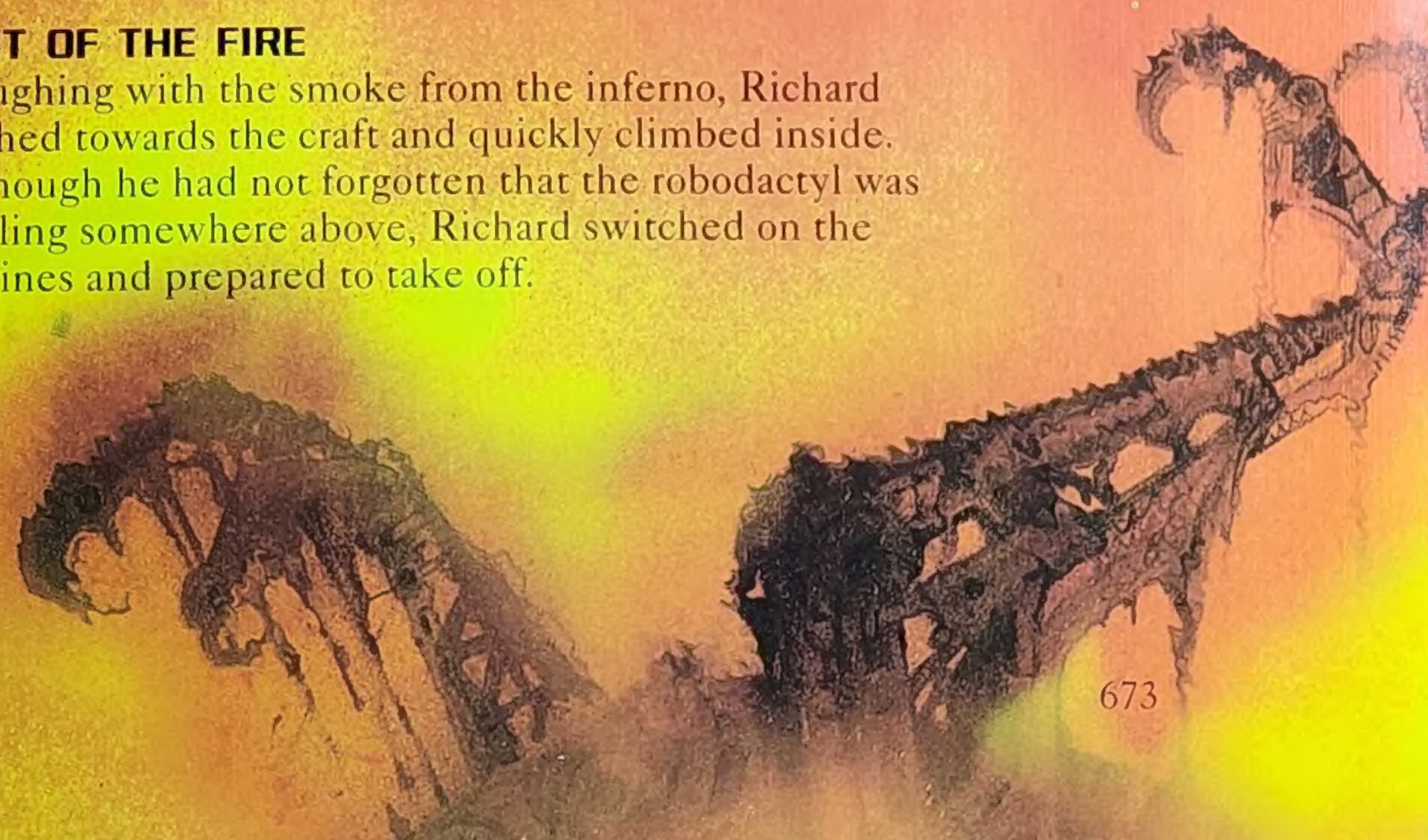
Sweat streamed down Richard's face as he stared in horror at the wall of flame surrounding him. All around lay the smouldering carcasses of the robot dinosaurs. The forest fire had him completely trapped. He watched helplessly as a huge tree keeled over nearby and hit the ground with a crash. As a shower of sparks danced in the air like a fireworks display, something familiar caught his attention.

At first, he thought it must be the remains of another dinosaur. Then he realized what it really was.

Partially obscured by a clump of burning branches was the answer to Richard's prayers. "The cyber cruiser!" he cried out. Somehow, his frantic chase through the cyber jungle had led him back to the flying machine. The awesome Tyrannix had inadvertently chased Richard around in a circle.

Out of the fire

Coughing with the smoke from the inferno, Richard dashed towards the craft and quickly climbed inside. Although he had not forgotten that the robodactyl was circling somewhere above, Richard switched on the engines and prepared to take off.



The powerful machine rose easily into the blackened skies. Richard pulled back the joystick and accelerated away from the scene of devastation. He flew on until the dense plume of smoke that rose from the burning jungle became nothing but a small dark stain floating above the retreating cyber horizon.

Deserted land

As he skimmed the air currents, Richard was overcome with a feeling of deep sadness. For the first time since his arrival in this strange world he was truly alone. His companion was gone forever. The little robot may have been infuriating at times but his presence was sorely missed.

Richard flew on until he lost track of time. If it were at all possible, he would have stayed airborne forever. It was only the tiredness of his limbs and the heaviness of his eyes that finally made him decide to look for somewhere to land.

Below him, Richard spied an expanse of flat ground. It was deserted and did not look particularly welcoming. However, there did not appear to be any dangers. The cruiser landed gracefully and Richard stepped out and looked around. There was no sign whatsoever of the cyber jungle. In place of the lush carpet of greenery was a dull, monotonous terrain dotted with circular grilles. They reminded Richard of the man-hole covers that lined the streets at home.

As he was examining one of the grilles, Richard was surprised to see it slowly begin to open. Quick as a flash, he moved to draw his sword. Before he had the chance to do so he felt something touch his body armour. In an instant, he found himself completely enveloped by a heaving swarm of strange, furry creatures.

For several moments, Richard did not know what to do. Almost every part of his body was covered by the furry fluff-balls. He vainly tried to shake off the strange animals but they stuck to him like glue.

Then Richard heard a noise that made his panic subside. The little animals were purring like cats. The sound was not at all aggressive. In fact, it was rather soothing.

The owners of the voices were also gently rubbing themselves up against him.

A grin crossed over Richard's face and he felt himself relax. He was not under attack – the creatures were merely being friendly.

As one of the newcomers began to tickle him, Richard forced himself to suppress a giggle. Then one of the animals spoke.

THE WIGMATS

"Richard," it said, in a dreamy, sing-song voice, "nicecool."

Richard's smile widened. "I beg your pardon?" he replied softly.

"Richard, nicecool," the little creature repeated. "You come to save us?"

"If you get your friends to let go of me we can talk about it," Richard laughed.

The little animal, who had been clinging to Richard's ankle, released its grip and put a pair of stubby fingers to its lips. It gently blew and a sound like the soft tones of a flute filtered through the air.

One by one, the newcomers relaxed their hold on Richard's body and dropped gently to the ground. When his body armour was finally free of the last creature Richard took a long look at what he thought must be their leader.

"Who are you?" Richard enquired.

"I am Teeza. These are my friends. We are wigmats. Nicecool," the creature replied in soothing, high-pitched tones.

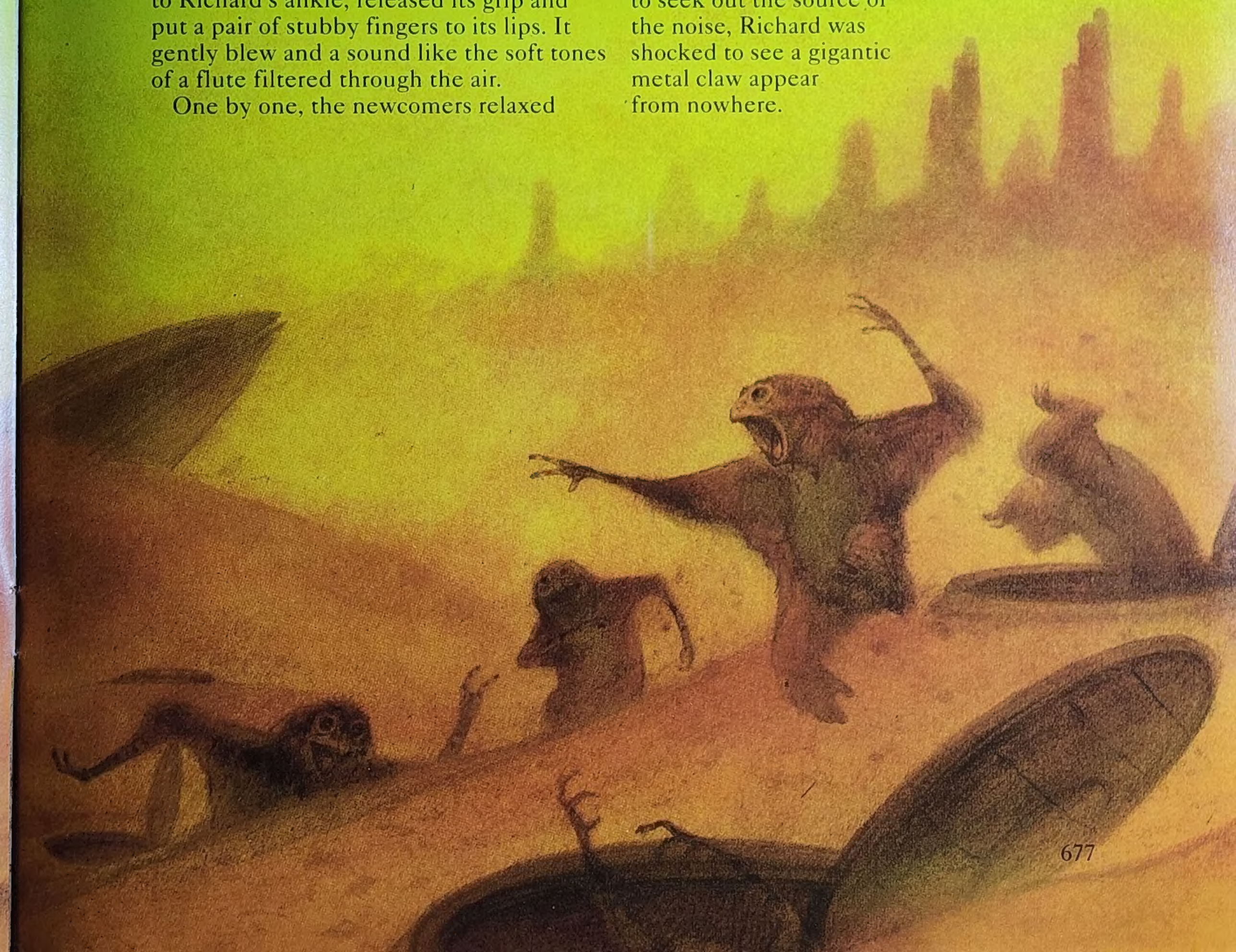
"What do you want?"

Teeza cleared his throat. "We wait for you. You come to save us. It is written."

"Save you from what?" Richard said, feeling completely bemused.

"You must rid us of the Evil One," the wigmat continued. "He is badvibe."

Before Richard had the chance to reply, a deep booming sound from nearby interrupted him. As he turned his head to seek out the source of the noise, Richard was shocked to see a gigantic metal claw appear from nowhere.



With a look of horror spreading over his face, Richard watched as the owner of the claw emerged from the ground. The creature was enormous. Coated in glinting metal armour, it resembled a huge metallic crab. Set above a pair of piercing fluorescent eyes was a strange opening, from which emitted an intense light that hurt Richard's eyes as he studied it.

As the beast trundled menacingly towards him, Richard felt a pair of tiny hands tug at his leg. It was Teeza. "G... Galaxia coming," the little creature stuttered. "We run. Follow me!"

Richard did not need to be told twice. As his new-found friend scampered away in the opposite direction, Richard followed suit. While he ran, Richard took a quick look to see what the other wigmats were doing.

Grisly feast

Several of them had broken away from the rest of the group and were frantically hopping about with their arms waving wildly in the air. The remainder appeared rooted to the spot, their fur standing on end. It was as if someone had put an electric current through them. They were obviously extremely frightened.

From the corner of his eye, Richard watched in terror as Galaxia scooped up several of the little creatures with a mighty claw. The screams of the terrified animals filled Richard's ears. He watched as they were hurled into the strange opening above Galaxia's eyes. Trembling with fear, Richard fled the scene of horror as fast as his quaking legs could carry him.

Followed by other wigmats, Teeza led Richard to one of the strange grilles from which the little animal had earlier emerged. Teeza pulled the grille open and beckoned him to enter.

It was a tight squeeze but Richard just managed to fit through the rounded hole. Inside, he could see nothing but darkness. It was several moments before Richard's eyes grew accustomed to the light and he saw that he was standing in a tunnel.

Underground chase

"Where are we?" Richard asked.

"In wigmat homestead." Teeza replied, still shaking with fear. "It's nicecool."

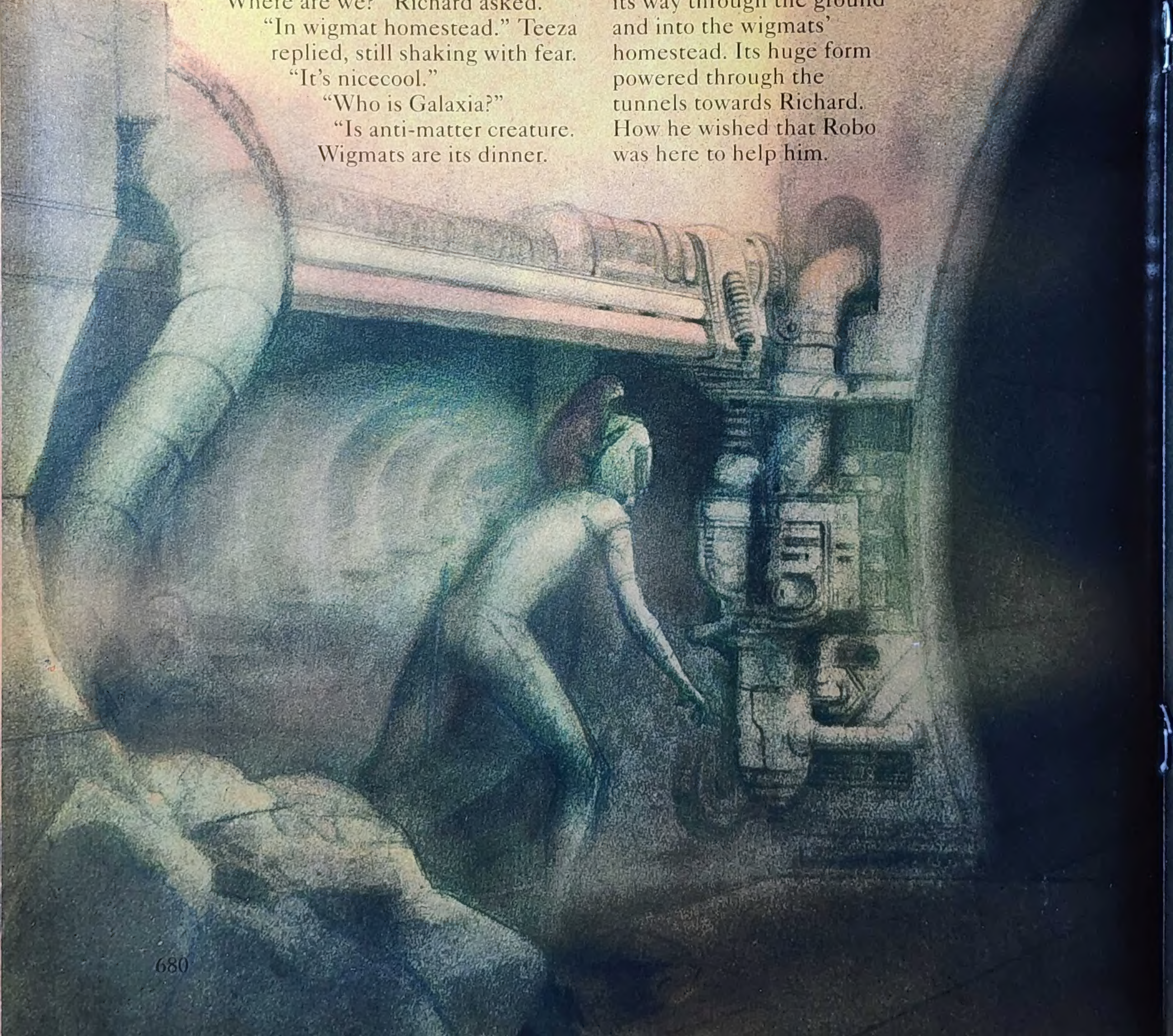
"Who is Galaxia?"

"Is anti-matter creature. Wigmats are its dinner. Badvibe. We like not."

With Teeza leading the way, Richard followed the wigmats through the tunnel. Just as he was beginning to feel that he was safe, a tremendous noise from above could be heard. Once more, the wigmats froze in fear.

"Galaxia is digging to find its dinner." Teeza exclaimed. "Run!"

As the wigmats scattered in all directions, Galaxia came into view. Using its powerful metal claws, the creature had gouged its way through the ground and into the wigmats' homestead. Its huge form powered through the tunnels towards Richard. How he wished that Robo was here to help him.



Richard drew his sword and held it before him. He knew it would be of little use against the gigantic behemoth that was rapidly approaching him, but it was the only thing that he could think of doing.

"What do you want of me?" he cried, his voice shaking.

Calculated risk

The sound of Richard's voice had a strange effect on Galaxia. The metallic monster stopped moving and studied Richard. Its glowing eyes scanned Richard's torso as if it had never before seen a human being.

The unexpected pause gave Richard the opportunity to search for a weakness in his heavily armoured opponent. After a few moments, Galaxia started to move again. Gears creaked and metal joints groaned as the massive creature resumed its relentless pursuit of Richard.

All of a sudden, Richard had the makings of an idea. Again his eyes were drawn towards the strange aperture above Galaxia's eyes. It was obviously some kind of mouth. Clumps of undigested wigmat fur could be seen around its edges.

"If it's only used to eating wigmats," Richard mused, "let's see if it likes the taste of cold steel."

Richard stood his ground and waited until Galaxia had moved to within touching distance and then threw his sword into the glowing opening with all the force he could muster.

A taste of revenge

The spinning blade entered the hole and was instantly lost in its bright glow. Richard waited to see if there was any kind of reaction. The monster stopped in its tracks. There was a moment of silence. Then Richard started in surprise as the sword shot out of the opening and narrowly missed hitting him. Galaxia had spat the weapon out.

Suddenly, an enormous explosion came from the centre of the beast. Richard flung himself to the ground. A blinding flash of light followed and then a wave of searing heat. Richard's idea had been successful.

There was another, bigger, explosion and burning fragments of the molten monster flew through the air. The creature was destroyed.

Richard retrieved his sword and returned it to its scabbard. He noted that the handle was still warm, as were the smoking remnants of Galaxia that lay scattered all around him.

Song of Joy

From the shadows, the wigmats slowly began to appear. Teeza was the first to thank Richard for his brave deed. "Yippee!" he cheered." Galaxia is finished. Long live Richard!"

With that, Teeza and his companions began to sing. Although it was not particularly tuneful, Richard found himself entranced by their strange, alien melody.

When the song was over, one of the wigmats held up an arm and yelled: "Present for Richard!"

Richard watched as Teeza scampered over to the shattered carcass of Galaxia and carefully looked over the remains. With a whoop of delight, the little creature picked up a small shining object and waved it in the air triumphantly.

Richard instantly knew what it was. It was an Omni piece. It had been concealed within the monster's massive torso. Teeza moved to hand the piece over to Richard.

"No – I'm sorry," he exclaimed. "It's dangerous for me to touch it." He was remembering the time when he had passed out after holding the first Omni piece he and Robo had located.

"Never mind," said the wigmat," Teeza will carry it for you."

"I can't ask you to do that," Richard replied. "It would mean you coming with me to find the rest of the Omni pieces."

The little animal giggled. "Nicefun," he said, "Teeza likes Richard lots."

Richard watched in fascination as Teeza placed the Omni piece in a small pouch at the front of his belly. "You're not related to a kangaroo, are you?" Richard asked.

CHEERFUL GOOD-BYE

With Teeza skipping behind him, Richard made his way to the surface of the strange terrain and found the parked cyber cruiser.

The other wigmats waved good-bye as the two climbed aboard and the flying machine rose into the air. Teeza was sitting in the place that used to be occupied by Robo. As Richard steered the craft away from the gathering of little creatures he could not help thinking about Robo. Not only had he lost a friend, but the three Omni pieces that the robot was carrying were also gone forever.

As they travelled, Teeza proved to be far better company than Robo. His endless chattering never failed to amuse Richard. It was a welcome contrast to the staccato replies that Robo used to deliver.

Gradually the landscape began to change. The sombre pastel colours of the wigmats' land gave way to a bright cobalt blue terrain that glittered and shone in the cyber sunshine. Richard was beginning to enjoy the journey when something ahead caught his attention.

At first, Richard thought that he was approaching a vast forest. Then he realized what the spindly objects that reached up into the skies actually were.

"They look like giant pillars," he cried.

"Pillows," Teeza said. "Sleep on pillows. Hmmm. Nicecool."

"No, not pillows," Richard replied. "Pillars. Lots of them, too." He could sense danger.

The huge metallic rods jutted out from the ground at all angles. Richard realized that he would have to steer the cyber cruiser with great care if he was to avoid hitting one of them. "Hold on tight!" he called to his new companion.

Richard was forced to use all his powers of concentration as he steered the cyber cruiser in and out of the columns. Some of them were so close together that he had to turn the flying machine on its side to ensure that their journey did not come to an abrupt and tragic end.

Teeza seemed completely unaware of their perilous predicament. Each time that Richard narrowly avoided hitting one of the columns, the little creature would whoop with delight as if he were enjoying an exciting dodgem ride at a fairground.

On several occasions Richard tried firing the cruiser's neutron lasers at the strange obstacles. They made no impression on the columns. The lasers were deflected away harmlessly.

DEAD-END DANGER

After flying on for what seemed like forever, the rows of columns began to thin out. A smile crossed Richard's lips and he began to hope that his ordeal might be coming to an end.

It was Teeza that noticed the new danger. "Badvibe!" he groaned in horror.

Richard followed his friend's gaze and gasped. They were heading towards a sheer cliff face. There were going to crash.

SHOOMI'S SANCTUARY

Enter into the Cyber Dimension and engage optical recognition to find...

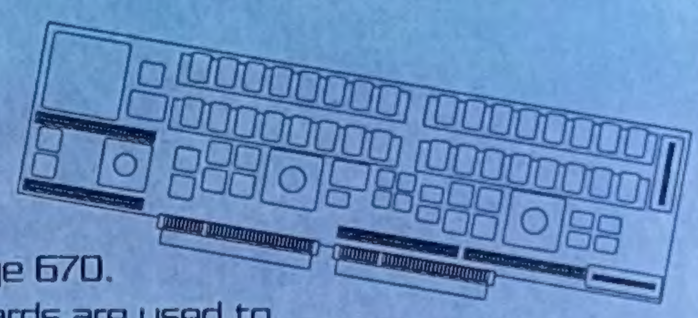
▶ Shoomi and Shoobi

Shoomi and Shoobi are still keeping up with our hero's adventures. Can you spot Richard's twin shadows somewhere in this issue in under than three minutes?

In issue 42 Shoomi and Shoobi were on page 660.

▶ Computer Challenge

Hidden somewhere in this issue is a vitally important computer component from the sinister Cyber Dimension. Use your visual skills to help Richard and his new friend Teeza locate it in less than three minutes.
When you have discovered the component's hiding place, can you guess what it is and what its function might be?



In the last issue a computer accelerator card was hidden on page 670.
Accelerator cards are used to make computers perform tasks faster. They usually contain a computer processor that is superior to the processor in the computer to which they are connected. Once fitted, computer accelerators speed up processing time by as much as 800 per cent.

▶ Competition Details

When you have collected 26 letter blocks, you will be given a clue which will help you form them into a sentence that reveals the fatal flaw in the Cyber Dimension. The prize for the competition is a super Sega Mega Drive, complete with a copy of the great new role-playing game Shining Force.
Details on how to enter the competition will be given in a later issue.
NB The competition will be open to residents of the UK and Eire only.

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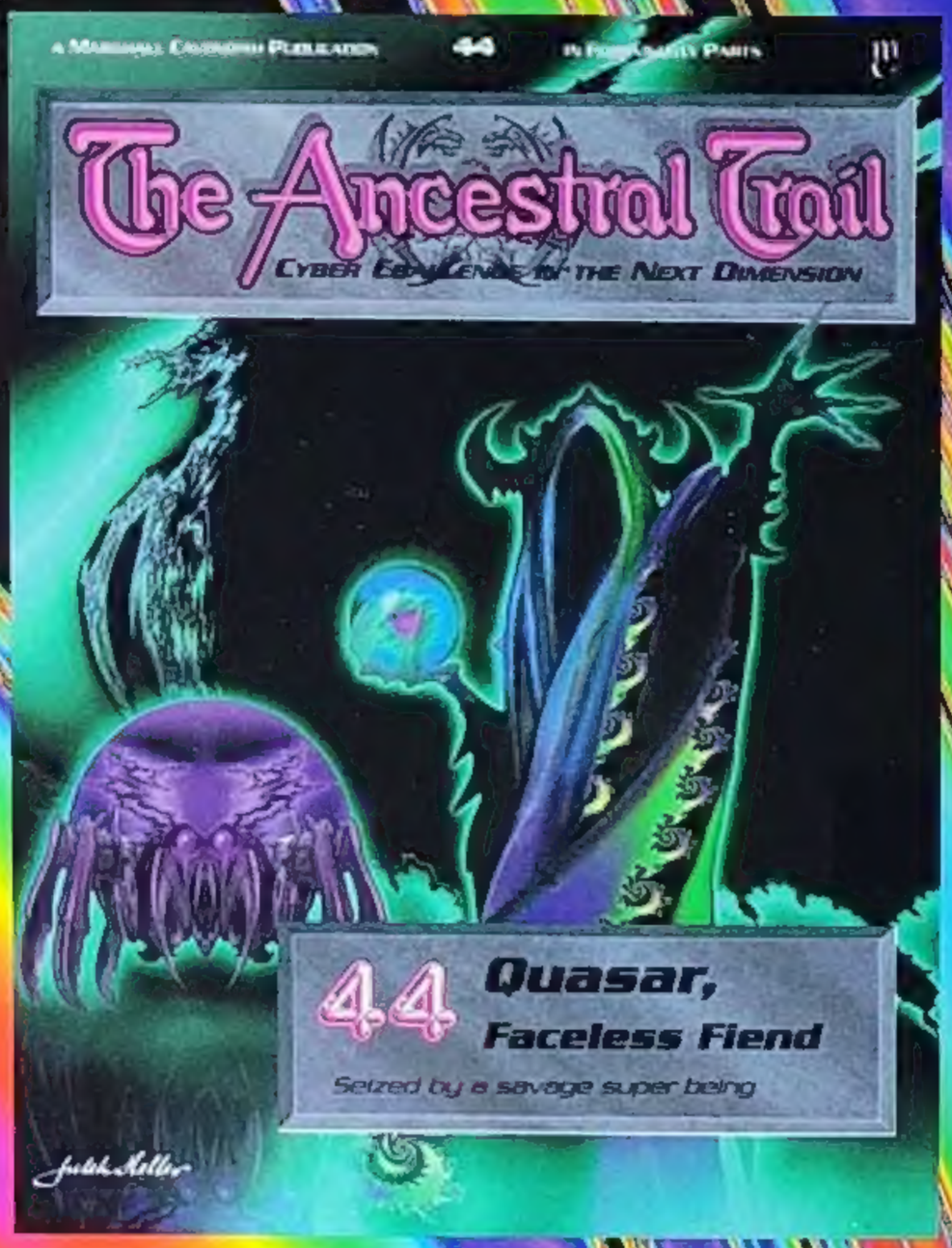
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In Four Limited Parts
The Ancestral Trail
Cyber Legends of the Next Dimension
44 Quasar, Faceless Fiend
Seized by a savage super being

In Issue 44

Quasar,

Faceless Fiend

Richard finds himself trapped in a world of fractals and meets its ruler, a creature who has no form. Can he and Teeza find a way out of this strange world?

plus

- The final segment of your **Cyber Chess** and **Mainframe Control** games board

Coming in Issue 45

Cortix, Mind Master

Richard battles the awesome mutators and then enters a computerized city. To escape, he must vanquish its evil guardian.

plus

2 more **Techscan** cards ▶ Special games rules booklet shows you how to play **Mainframe Control** and **Cyber chess.**

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